

would be necessary, because the law is, in itself, the will of the Godhead, and God himself must be unholy before his will can be. And whatever God may overlook in those who know not their duty, yet, when he reveals his perfect law, that law cannot, from the nature of its Author, allow the commission of a single sin. But, besides, if its holiness were not maintained, man is so constituted that he could never become holy. Every change to a better course in man's life must be preceded by a conviction of error—man cannot repeat and turn from sin till he is convicted of sin in himself. Now, if the holiness of the law, as a standard of duty, was maintained, man might thus be enlightened and convicted of sin, until he has seen and felt the last sin in his soul; and if the law allowed one sin, there would be no way of convicting man of that sin, or of converting him from it; he would therefore, remain, in some degree, a sinner forever. But, finally and conclusively, if the holiness of the law was not maintained, that sense of guilt and danger could not be produced which is necessary in order that man may love a spiritual Saviour. Jesus produced that condition by applying to the soul the authority, the claims, and the sanctions of the holy law. It is impossible, therefore, in the nature of things, for a sinful being to appreciate God's mercy, unless he first feel his justice as manifested in the holy law. Love in the soul is produced by the joint influence of the justice and mercy of God. The integrity of the eternal law, therefore, must be forever maintained.

How, then, could God manifest that mercy to sinners, by which love to Himself and to his law would be produced, while His infinite holiness and justice would be maintained?

We answer, in no way possible but by some expedient, by which his justice and mercy would both be exalted. If, in the wisdom of the Godhead, such a way could be devised by which God himself could save the soul from the consequences of its guilt—by which He himself could in some way suffer and make self-denials for its good; and, by his own interposition, open a way for the soul to recover from its lost and condemned condition, then the result would follow inevitably, that every one of the human family who had been led to see and feel his guilty condition before God, and who believed in God thus manifesting Himself to rescue his soul from spiritual death—every one, thus believing, would from the necessities of his nature, be led to love God his Saviour; and—mark—the greater the self-denial and the suffering on the part of the Saviour, in ransoming the soul, the stronger would be the affection felt for Him.

This is the central and vital doctrine of the Plan of Salvation. We will now, by throwing light and accumulating strength upon this doctrine from different points, illustrate and establish it beyond the possibility of rational doubt.

## I.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS THAT IT WAS NECESSARY MAN SHOULD FEEL THE WANT, IN ORDER TO EXERCISE THE LOVE.

Jesus uniformly speaks of it as being necessary, that previously to accepting him as a Saviour, the soul should feel the need of salvation. He does not even invite the thoughtless sinner, or the godless worldling, who has no sense of the evil or the guilt of sin, to come to him. Said Jesus, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The whole need not a physician, but they who are sick." "Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Thus, the points which have been shown to be necessary, from the constitution of things, in order to the soul's loving God, are presented in the same light

by Jesus himself: and upon the principle which they involve, he acted during his ministry.

## II.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES THAT GOD DID THUS MANIFEST HIMSELF AS SUFFERING AND MAKING SELF-DENIALS FOR THE SPIRITUAL GOOD OF MEN.

God was in Christ, says the Apostle, reconciling the world to Himself: that is, God was in Christ doing those things that would restore to Himself the obedience and affection of every one that believed. Christ represents himself as a ransom for the soul; as laying down his life for believers. He is represented as descending from an estate of the highest felicity; taking upon him the nature of man, and humbling himself even to the death of the cross; a death of the most excruciating torture; and thus bearing the sins of men in his own body on the tree, that through his death God might be just, and the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus.

It was thus, by a self-denial surpassing description—by a life of labor for human good, accomplished by constant personal sacrifices, and tending, at every step, towards the centre of the vortex, He went on until, finally, life closed to a crisis, by the passion in the garden—the rebuke, and the buffet, and the cruel mockery of the Jews and the Romans—and then, bearing his cross, faint with former agony of spirit, and his flesh quivering with recent scourging, he goes to Calvary, where the agonized sufferer for human sin, cried "IT IS FINISHED," and gave up the ghost.

Such is the testimony of the Scriptures; and it may be affirmed, without hesitancy, that it would be impossible for the human soul to exercise full faith in the testimony, that it was a guilty and needy creature, condemned by the holy law of a holy God; and that from this condition of spiritual guilt and danger, Jesus Christ suffered and died to accomplish its ransom—we say a human being could not exercise full faith in these truths and not love the Saviour.

## III.

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST PRODUCES THE NECESSARY EFFECT UPON THE HUMAN SOUL, IN RESTORING IT TO AFFECTIONATE OBEDIENCE, WHICH NEITHER PHILOSOPHY, LAW, NOR PRECEPTIVE TRUTH COULD ACCOMPLISH.

The wisdom of Divine Providence was conspicuous in the fact, that previously to the introduction of Christianity, all the resources of human wisdom had been exhausted in efforts to confer upon man true knowledge and true happiness. Although most of the great names of antiquity, were conspicuous rather for those properties which rendered them a terror and a scourge to mankind; and, although society among the ancients, in its best estate, was little better than semi-barbarism; yet, there was a class in society during the Augustan and Periclean age, and even at some periods before that time, that was cultivated in mind and manners. From this class, individuals at times arose who were truly great—men distinguished alike for the strength, compass, and discrimination of their intellect. In all the efforts of these men, with the exception of those who applied themselves exclusively to the study of physical phenomena, the great end sought was the means or secret of human happiness. All admitted that human nature, as they found it, was in an imperfect or depraved condition, and not in the enjoyment of its chief good; and the plans which they proposed, by which to obtain that happiness, of which they believed the soul susceptible, were as various, and diverse from each other, as can be imagined. No one of these plans ever accomplished, in any degree, the end desired. And no one of them was ever adapted to, or embraced by the common people. The philosophers themselves, after wrangling for the honor of having